



# THE EQUAL RIGHTS CENTER **ANNUAL REPORT**

# 2017

# OUR MISSION

The Equal Rights Center (ERC) is a civil rights organization that identifies and seeks to eliminate unlawful and unfair discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations in its home community of Greater Washington, D.C., and nationwide.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

The ERC's core strategy for identifying unlawful and unfair discrimination is civil rights testing. When the ERC identifies discrimination, it seeks to eliminate it through the use of testing data to educate the public and business community, support policy advocacy, conduct compliance testing and training, and, if necessary, take enforcement action.

**CIVIL RIGHTS TESTING**  
IS A VALUABLE TOOL FOR



EDUCATING  
THE PUBLIC



SUPPORTING  
POLICY  
ADVOCACY



TRAINING  
BUSINESSES



ENFORCING  
THE LAW

# ADVANCEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

## IN 2017 WE...

TRAINED  
**60**  
CIVIL RIGHTS  
TESTERS.

RESPONDED TO **214**  
INDIVIDUALS REPORTING  
DISCRIMINATION.

CONDUCTED **20**  
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS FAIR HOUSING  
TRAININGS FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS  
AND SERVICE PROVIDERS.

CONDUCTED  
**556**  
CIVIL RIGHTS  
TESTS TO IDENTIFY  
UNLAWFUL  
AND UNFAIR  
DISCRIMINATION.

CONDUCTED **93**  
FAIR HOUSING AND ACCESSIBILITY  
TRAININGS FOR CORPORATE  
PARTNERS.

PUBLISHED **17**  
BLOG POSTS AND ADVICE COLUMNS.

# OUR PROGRAMS



## FAIR HOUSING

There are many things to consider when finding a home; discrimination shouldn't be one of them.



## ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY RIGHTS

Creating a world that welcomes everyone means building spaces and technology accessible to all.



## EMPLOYMENT

Discrimination should never be part of the job.



## PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Ensuring everyone's right to fully and freely participate in society is about opening doors, and propping them open permanently.



## COMPLIANCE

Civil rights is the right thing to do, and it's good for business.

# DOCUMENTING DISCRIMINATION

THE ERC RELEASED SEVERAL NEW PUBLICATIONS IN 2017.

## HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST VOUCHER HOLDERS IN DC IS ILLEGAL!

helps Voucher holders identify potential illegal discrimination during their housing searches.



## CRIMINAL RECORDS SCREENING AND FAIR HOUSING: A TOOLKIT FOR CONSUMERS

educates individuals with criminal records about their fair housing rights and provides information about how to effectively advocate for those rights.



## SPECIAL INSERT: HOW TO RECOGNIZE DISCRIMINATORY BANS IN HOUSING

provides a specific example of a discriminatory ban related to criminal records screening in housing so that individuals can more easily recognize if they've been discriminated against.



**INTERIOR DESIGN AND THE FAIR HOUSING ACT** educates interior designers and housing providers about their responsibility to design common use areas in an accessible manner. The brochure is available in English, Spanish, and Amharic.



# TAKING ACTION

Conducted a civil rights testing investigation revealing that wheelchair users trying to use Uber's "TAXI WAV" service waited an average of eight times longer for an accessible vehicle to arrive and paid as much as twice as much in fares than customers using "Uber X". In June, the ERC filed suit against Uber alleging that its failure to ensure a comparable level of service for wheelchair users in D.C. violates Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), along with the D.C. Human Rights Act.

Filed suit against and then entered into a court enforced agreement with a D.C. housing provider to eliminate race and source of income discrimination that came to light as the result of a testing investigation. The agreement will increase racial equity and make it easier for Housing Choice Voucher users to secure housing opportunities in the District.

Alleged in a federal lawsuit that Mid-America Apartments, the largest private landlord in the country, violated the Fair Housing Act when it enforced its policy of categorically excluding any tenant who has a felony conviction or pending felony charge as well as certain misdemeanors or pending misdemeanor charges. Statistical analysis demonstrates that such a policy has a disproportionate adverse impact on African Americans and Latinos.

Published a new video, *Accessibility Makes Life Better for Everyone*, about the importance of accessible design and construction in housing. The video is designed to educate the public on the benefits and necessity of designing housing to be accessible for everyone.

# PARTNERING FOR PROGRESS

Co-hosted the 16th Annual DC Fair Housing Month Symposium in collaboration with the D.C. Office of Human Rights, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Developmental Disabilities Council, and Housing Counseling Services. The Symposium explored the theme *Transformative Integration: Changing Times in Fair Housing* and included a keynote address by Sheryll Cashin and four “Know Your Rights” workshops.

Hosted our annual Multifamily Housing Resource Program meeting for housing industry partners. The meeting included a “Battle of the Accessibility Experts” between Bill Hecker and Mark Mazz.

Collaborated with the Humane Rescue Alliance to train their staff about the rights of people with disabilities who have service and assistance animals as well as to develop website content for them on that topic.



Convened our Annual Members’ Meeting and Alumni Reception at Busboys and Poets and collectively celebrated our dedicated members including special awards honoring Sylvester Fiers as Advocate of the Year, Trammell Crow Residential as Corporate Partner of the Year, and the Washington Lawyers’ Committee, Joseph Sellers, and John Heintz with Outstanding Public Service Awards.

# RAISING VISIBILITY ONLINE

## THE ERC'S FAIR HOUSING ADVICE COLUMN

In May 2017, the ERC launched its Fair Housing Advice Column, *Dear Susie*, online. D.C. area residents, housing providers, and other stakeholders can submit questions for fair housing experts at the ERC to answer based on over 30 years of experience.



## BEST PRACTICES FOR ENSURING THAT CRIMINAL RECORDS SCREENING POLICIES & PRACTICES COMPLY WITH FAIR HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

Launched in December 2017, this course gives housing providers information about best practices for ensuring that their housing related criminal records screening policies and practices align with the Fair Housing Act and recent guidance from HUD. The course is interactive with audio and video components to help establish how criminal records screening can become a fair housing issue. It provides concrete information housing providers can use to comply with fair housing requirements and takes less than 1.5 hours to complete.



# STAFF



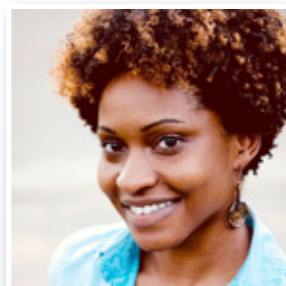
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



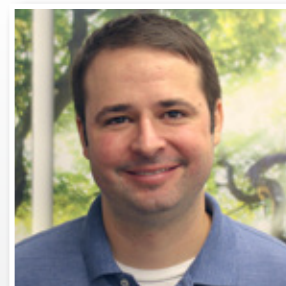
**KATE SCOTT**  
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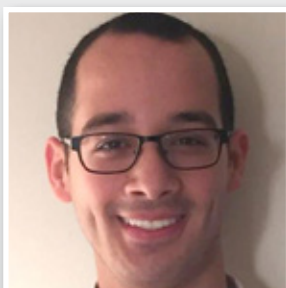
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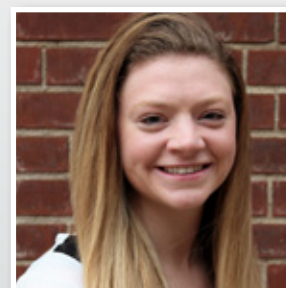
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# A STORY OF SUCCESS



In June 2017, Ms. Ortiz McLetchie contacted the ERC because she was unable to access the kitchen and bathroom of her studio apartment without significant issues. She explained that her physical disability requires her to use a walker, and because the apartment was so small, she could not get into the rooms with it. She had asked her property manager on multiple occasions over several years to move her to a more accessible unit.

After visiting Ms. McLetchie at her home, the ERC contacted the property manager and advocated for her to be transferred to a larger one-bedroom unit as a reasonable accommodation. In August 2017, she was able to move to a larger unit and is now able to access all areas of her living space safely.

# STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

## AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2017 AND 2016

ASSETS		
	2017	2016
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 319,735	\$ 1,350,627
Investments	\$ 904,201	–
Accounts receivable, net of allowance for doubtful accounts of \$0 and \$1,000 at December 31, 2017 and 2016, respectively	\$ 192,390	\$ 279,464
Prepaid expenses	\$ 16,600	\$ 6,688
Total current assets	\$ 1,432,926	\$ 1,636,779
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Equipment	\$ 65,087	\$ 65,087
Furniture	\$ 35,518	\$ 86,331
	\$ 100,605	\$ 151,418
Less: Accumulated depreciation and amortization	\$ (100,605)	\$ (151,418)
Net fixed assets	\$ –	\$ –
<b>OTHER ASSETS</b>		
Other Assets	\$ 18,311	–
Accounts receivable, net of current portion	\$ 196,952	\$ 339,383
Total other assets	\$ 215,263	\$ 339,383
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 1,648,189</b>	<b>\$ 1,976,162</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 9,807	\$ 13,423
Accrued salaries and related benefits	\$ 27,951	\$ 21,394
Deferred rent liability - current portion	\$ 23,538	\$ –
Total current liabilities	\$ 61,296	\$ 34,817
<b>LONG-TERM LIABILITIES</b>		
Deferred revenue	\$ 397,000	\$ 644,964
Deferred rent liability	\$ –	\$ 33,794
Total long-term liabilities	\$ 397,000	\$ 678,758
Total liabilities	\$ 458,296	\$ 713,575
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted	\$ 1,189,893	\$ 1,262,587
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS (DEFICIT)</b>	<b>\$ 1,648,189</b>	<b>\$ 1,976,162</b>

# STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017 AND 2016

	2017	2016
	Total	Total
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Contributions	\$ 25,937	\$ 81,099
Foundation grants	\$ 20,000	\$ 18,755
Government grants	\$ 410,625	\$ 435,240
Contracts	\$ 373,205	\$ 335,891
Investment income	\$ 4,333	\$ -
Membership	\$ 272,533	\$ 321,500
Contributed services	\$ 1,304,602	\$ 1,299,574
Settlements and awards	\$ 86,451	\$ 1,512,551
Other revenue	\$ 2,561	\$ 15,340
Net assets released from donor restrictions	\$ -	\$ -
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 2,500,247</b>	<b>\$ 4,019,950</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Program Services	\$ 2,259,685	\$ 2,160,837
Supporting Services:		
General and Administrative	\$ 299,879	\$ 489,557
Fundraising	\$ 13,377	\$ 46,265
Total supporting services	\$ 313,256	\$ 535,822
Total expenses	\$ 2,572,941	\$ 2,696,659
Changes in net assets	\$ (72,694)	\$ 1,389,667
Net assets at beginning of year	\$ 1,262,587	\$ (60,704)
<b>NET ASSETS (DEFICIT) AT END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 1,189,893</b>	<b>\$ 1,262,587</b>



## THE EQUAL RIGHTS CENTER

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